 ADDRESSING THE NEED FOR SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORLIFE LITERACY HAS A CONNECTION TO FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES AT THE FOUNDATIONAL LEVEL.

Family and Consumer Sciences has many connections to today’s world which range from healthy relationships, obesity prevention, and food technology, to wellness, consumer, family and personal finance and child development all through inquiry based instruction and 21st century skills development for life success and Human Services careers.

Family and Consumer Sciences: Foundational Life Literacy

Today, many stress the need for specific aptitudes related to the 21st century skills and success skills. These range from critical and innovative thinking to effective communication and ability to work in teams successfully.

This is also reflected in the occupational framework of the Common Career and Technical Core—Career Ready Practices.

Family and Consumer Sciences has been teaching 21st century skills since 1996. This ability to take information in context and process it using these skills is strategic and repeated at increased rigor to ensure students “get it”. This aligns with STEM and social/emotional development as well.

The 21st century process skills, which align with life literacy skills, are the following:

◊ Problem Solving
◊ Decision Making
◊ Goal Setting
◊ Cooperation
◊ Management
◊ Leadership
◊ Communication
◊ Critical Thinking

Connecting to STEM Professions

Family and Consumer Sciences is found in middle and secondary schools across the nation. In fact, 455 Kansas Family and Consumer Sciences teachers are teaching 37,900 students enrolled in 97,200 pathway classes according to the Spring 2015 Family and Consumer Education Program Survey. This survey further documented a 3:1 female to male participation which means FCS is placed perfectly to introduce and promote STEM to all students, but strategically placed to offer a STEM introduction to females. In addition, many FCS areas align with STEM such as personal aptitude development, applied science through understanding in nutrition, food science and innovation, fibers, green technologies, universal living environments and sustainable living practices and promoting STEM in early childhood.
Documenting FCS / STEM Knowledge and Skills Through

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America is Family and Consumer Sciences in action.

Life literacy and career skill development can be documented through a variety of methods in the Family and Consumer Sciences classroom, but also through the student organization Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) which is only possible through FCS programs.

FCCLA provides the avenue for students to practice skills learned in Family and Consumer Sciences in authentic, real work applications and civic engagement. FCCLA offers a variety of experiences to allow the student an age and developmentally appropriate first step in leadership, teamwork and related 21st century employability skills, including the FCCLA planning process similar to the scientific design process.

Approximately 4,500 members in Kansas, representing all ethnic and socio-economic circumstance apply the FCS content through their families, school and communities, many working in diverse teams, impacting an additional 250,000 Kansans last year.

Through a recent survey of 30,000 secondary FCS students conducted by the National Research Center for Colleges and Universities (NRCUA), 63.2% attribute their ability to communicate well with others to their FCS/FCCLA experience and 61.3% attributed this combination to their ability to work successfully with others.

In addition, FCCLA offers competitive events in areas such as Food Innovations, Recycle and Redesign, Sports Nutrition, Interpersonal Communications, and Leadership. This extends into the career arena as well such as Early Childhood, Interior Design, and Culinary Math.

Many of these events require documentation of social emotional skills and understanding of iSTEM concepts.

Many do not realize Kansas FCS:

- Has two focus areas 1) prevention education which focuses on the development of the student to better address and manage work/life challenges and 2) foundational training in the helping careers, many of which are high need/high skill leading to attractive incomes;
- Teachers hold degrees specifically focused on social emotional development and the bettering the human condition with continual professional development from accredited universities within nutrition, wellness, food science and preparation, relationship education, parenting, child development, resource management and personal and family finance;
- Teachers are considered highly qualified to teach nutrition and wellness for health credit and a number are leading school wellness programs in Kansas; and
- Directly teaches social emotional skills with applications in civic engagement which are vital to the Kansan’s Can vision and student success through intelligent decision making, practicing foundational life literacy, and setting life and career goals.

Gayla Randel, CFCS
Education Program Consultant—Family and Consumer Sciences
Kansas State Department of Education
900 SW Jackson
grandel@ksde.org
785-296-4912